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JAPAN AND THE JAPANESE.

THE world was once a world of mysteries. Ancient maps were extraordinary-looking things, and modern maps of what the ancients knew are odd-looking skeletons, with a hand, perhaps, and a foot just covered by flesh, and all the rest mere outline. Country after country has been added, town after town; and once, to the amazement of the whole thinking universe, a whole continent came forth, unexpectedly, from the night of ages. And now America is peopled, India is a British province, islands like Australia are paving the floor of new empires, China is yielding up its secrets, and Japan, almost alone of those countries we wish to know, remains to a certain extent a sealed book. Precisely because it is a sealed book—because everybody has not an opportunity of knowing all about it—is that amount of curiosity developed which usually marks the inquiring mind. It is the sure result of some little reflection on foreign countries, and some little insight into books of travels in our youth, to make us in after-life eager students of geographical discovery. For our own parts, we believe that there is no style of reading more advantageous to the young mind than good books of travels. It arouses a habit of comparison; the variety of manners, ideas, thoughts, feelings, the host of prejudices peculiar to each nation, which are thus arrayed one against the other, must operate in a beneficial way upon the mind. By a knowledge of other lands, we learn to know better how to value what we ourselves possess.

There is no country about which we can inquire with more likelihood of our curiosity being gratified than about Japan. It must not be supposed that it has always been so hermetically closed: its present habit of seclusion dates from 1640, when the Portuguese were expelled, and Christianity, which was taking rapid root, was put down. The Portuguese Jesuit missionaries were at first well received, and favoured by the Japanese government; nor were they driven away by force of arms until they had begun to interfere with political affairs. A general massacre then ensued, stimulated probably by the Dutch, who ever since have been the only European people allowed to trade with Japan. The tale has been handed down to us by the Dutch of a certain yearly cursing and trampling upon the emblem of Christianity—the cross—by the Japanese. The statement, however, appears to be utterly devoid of foundation; indeed, the Japanese are rather exempt than otherwise from religious fanaticism.

Since the above expulsion, only one Chinese and one Dutch factory have been allowed. The interior has, then, been to a certain extent a great mystery, and yet, despite every care and precaution, truth will peep out. Medical men connected with the Dutch factory have written, and their books, with Japanese manuscripts, supply much information. We ourselves have the pleasure of constant correspondence with a relative in Batavia, who, from ex-members of the Dutch factory, has gleaned many useful facts. It is through Batavia, or Java, that all intercourse with Japan is carried on.

Some persons imagine that a stray junk of these strange people helped to people America, which, as there is no proof to the contrary, is quite possible. They, however, did not take, as far as we can see, any of their customs with them, unless, indeed, they be buried in the ruined cities of Yucatan, or in the graves of the Aztecs.

The aspect of the shores is gloomy, as if nature vied with man in her efforts to make the land inaccessible. Rocks, reefs, storms, fogs, are even more pestilential than the extreme *octroi* principle which the Japanese adopt, and which is so offensive even in the city of Paris. But as you approach nearer, you find before your eyes fresh green hills, richly cultivated in terraces, with cedars, and temple roofs, and huts rising in all directions. The inhabitants first seen are generally fishermen, all but naked; but the ship which enters Nagasaki Bay has soon other visitors. The guards come alongside, questions are asked, delays incurred, Bibles and

Prayer-books sealed up as dangerous, and hostages taken,—the whole crew and passengers examined to see that they really are Dutch; and then the ship is towed into the inner anchorage. From this place the view is delicious; hills, groves, oaks, cedars, laurels, corn-fields, gardens—all combine to attract and please the eye.

Immense precautions are now taken to prevent smuggling, which, nevertheless, does take place, though all efforts, even on the part of the president of the factory, to have the society of a wife allowed, have hitherto failed. The first thing that strikes the eye of the traveller is the appearance of the people he visits. A learned writer thus dilates upon them:—

“The Japanese have all the organic characteristics of Mongol conformation, the oblique position of the eye included; but they seem to be the least uncomely of that ugly race. Klaproth considers the Chinese portion of their nature to be happily modified by greater energy, muscular and intellectual. They are generally described as well made, strong, alert, and fresh-coloured; the young of both sexes as smooth-faced, rosy, and graced with abundance of fine black hair. The Dutch writers, indeed, dilate complacently upon the beauty of the young women, of which a specimen is given in a portrait in Siebold's work.”

Our engraving (p. 373) represents a specimen of a Japanese lady in all her finery. To continue:—“The gait of both sexes is allowed to be awkward; and the women the worst, in consequence of their bandaging their hips so tightly as to turn their feet inwards. The ordinary dress of both sexes, and all ranks, is in form very similar, differing chiefly in the colours, delicacy, and value of the materials. It consists of a number of loose wide gowns, worn over each other; those of the lower orders made of linen or calico—those of the higher, generally of silk, with the family arms woven or worked into the back and breast of the outer robe; and all fastened at the waist by a girdle. The sleeves are enormous in width and length, and the portion that hangs below the arm is closed at the end to answer the purpose of a pocket, subsidiary, however, to the capacious bosoms of the gowns, and to the girdles, where more valuable articles are deposited; amongst these are clean, neat squares of white paper, the Japanese substitutes for pocket-handkerchiefs, which, when used, are dropped into the sleeve, until an opportunity offers of throwing them away without soiling the house. This description applies to both sexes, but the ladies usually wear brighter colours than the men, and border their robes with gay embroidery or gold. Gentlemen wear a scarf over the shoulders; its great length is regulated by the rank of the wearer, and serves in turn to regulate the bow with which they greet each other, inasmuch as it is indispensable to bow to a superior until the ends of the scarf touch the ground.”

Their holiday garb is thus described:—“To the above, upon occasions of full dress, is superadded what is called the garb of ceremony. It consists of a cloak of a specific form thrown over the other clothes. With the cloak is worn, by the higher classes, a very peculiar sort of trousers, called *hakama*, which appears, both from the description given, and from the appearance of the article, so far as can be distinguished in the glass cases of the Hague Museum, to be formed of an immensely full-plaited petticoat, sewed up between the legs, and left sufficiently open on the outside to admit of free locomotion.”

Swords are the insignia of rank. Men in the higher ranks wear two, those a rank lower appear with one; the people are not allowed any. The figure we have engraved (p. 372) is that of a nobleman, and accordingly, as the reader will observe, two swords are represented. This may give some idea of the character of political society. Socks are worn in-doors, their shoes being exceedingly awkward. They are soles of straw-matting or wood, kept on by an upright pin between the toes, sometimes by a horn ring. The impossibility of lifting a foot

thus shod in walking may amply account for the awkward gait of the Japanese.

Their head-dress is distinctive. The men shave the front and crown of the head; the hair growing from the temples and back of the head is gathered together, drawn back, and forms a tuft. These peculiarities are faithfully depicted in the accompanying illustration. Priests and physicians shave clean, while surgeons retain theirs.

The women, exhibiting in this even more sense than the

feet long by 240 across—is an artificial island in the shape of a fan, separated from the town by a stone bridge. The eleven solid Dutchmen who dwell here, are watched with all the patience of the strange race they do business with. They are waited on by Japanese servants in the day, but the severe laws which force these men to leave at sunset have encouraged the introduction into the factory of a class of women of the lowest order, who alone are allowed to live on Dezima island. The children of these temporary wives are



JAPANESE NOBLEMAN.

men of civilised countries, keep all their hair, and make a kind of turban of it, stuck full of bits of tortoise-shell, a foot long, as thick as a man's finger, highly worked and polished. The more a lady's hair projects, the more she is dressed. No jewellery adorns their persons, the complexion is destroyed by red and white paint, the lips are daubed with purple, while the married women dye their teeth black and extract the eyebrows.

Except in rainy weather, the head is uncovered, a fan only shading off the sun. Everybody wears a fan,—man, woman, and child, soldiers, civilians, schoolmasters—every body.

The island inhabited by the Dutch—which is about 600

all taken as Japanese citizens, and are allowed little intercourse with their parents. None may die on this Dutch island, and this law occasions some painful scenes in case of sudden illness. Few visitors ever go to Dezima, a permission being so difficult to obtain as to amount almost to prohibition. No money transactions are allowed, and the severe laws of the monarchy are kept in force by a system of spies, quite equal to that of any European despotism.

President Meylan thus describes a visit paid to him by the chief police-officer, a burgomaster of Nagasaki: "Upon such occasions the president is bound, in expectation of their arrival, to spread a carpet, to provide liqueurs and sweetmeats to be offered at the proper time, to await the high

dignitary at his own door, and when the said high dignitary has seated himself in Japanese fashion, on his heels on the carpet, to squat himself down in like manner, bowing his head two or three times to the ground, and thus making his compliment, as it is termed here. In all this I should see nothing, it being the usual mode in which Japanese grantees receive and salute each other; but here, in my mind, lies the offence, that between Japanese this compliment is reciprocated, whilst at an interview between a Netherlander and a Japanese

grantee of the rank of a *gobanyosi*, the compliment of the former is not returned by the latter, he being esteemed an exceedingly friendly burgomaster, or *gobanyosi*, who even nods his head to the Netherlander in token of approval. All this is the more striking to the Netherlander newly landed at Dezima and not yet used to the custom, because he observes the Japanese to be amongst themselves full of ceremony and demonstration of politeness, in which the nation yields to no other, not even to the French."



JAPANESE LADY.

THE DEAD BRIDAL.

A VENETIAN TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

BY JONATHAN FREKE SLINGSBY.

CHAPTER XIX.

LET us go back to two of the personages of our tale in whom we trust our readers are interested.

Giulio Polani had returned with the troops to Venice, and resumed his intercourse with Bianca without any restraint. In truth, there seemed to be no reason why the young people should feel any restraint. It was natural for them to suppose that the Count Polani would not be averse to their union, and he certainly did not seem to trouble himself about the matter. Alas! his thoughts were occupied too much about his pecuniary difficulties to permit him to be very keen-eyed as to how two young members of his family passed their time; and if he thought of Bianca, it was with the determination that, come

what might, he would resist, if possible, the fulfilment of his foolish contract in relation to her.

Upon the day when the count paid the visit to Pietro Molo, Giulio and Bianca sat alone in a *salone* of the Palazzo Polani. The young man looked fondly upon the girl, but his look was full of joy—there was nothing to trouble its happiness, or dim the confiding hope that shone out from his eyes. The girl, with glowing cheek and down-turned eyes, was apparently contemplating, with very profound attention, a fresh rose-bud which she held in her hand, but from which she nevertheless from time to time plucked the young leaves. The case of the young couple was manifest. Even old Giudetta, dim-eyed as